



STATE OF MAINE  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
1 STATE HOUSE STATION  
AUGUSTA, MAINE  
04333-0001

Paul R. LePage  
GOVERNOR

18 August 2011

The Honorable Olympia Snowe  
United States Senate  
154 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
United States Senate  
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
United States House of Representatives  
1318 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Michael Michaud  
United States House of Representatives  
1724 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senators Snowe and Collins and Representatives Michaud and Pingree:

As you all know, the Federal Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) helps keep Maine's most vulnerable families warm during our rugged winters. The cuts proposed to LIHEAP by President Obama will have a disparate impact on our State for three primary reasons.

First, Maine's population remains the oldest in the nation. This is further compounded by our state tax system – many successful Mainers, when they reach retirement age, flee to states with low or no income or estate taxes. My Administration is working hard to ensure in the future Mainers will be able to keep what they have earned while continuing to make Maine their home. However, until we can implement those fundamental changes and encourage those with means to stay in the state, our elderly population is and will remain a resource-poor population.

Second, even in boom times Maine's wages lag the national average. In this anemic economy, the strain on the budgets of working Maine people is nearly breaking their backs. The resources of our non-profits and the generosity of our citizens are also stretched thin and we cannot ask for more from them. Leadership is necessary to ensure that Maine citizens can make it through the winter.

Third, oil prices for this heating season continue to rise. Some contracts are being locked in at \$4.25 per gallon and 80 percent of Maine homes are heated with oil. When this is coupled with the first two realities, it would seem the only possible course of action for needy Mainers is to hope for a mild winter. Unfortunately, 'hope' is not a responsible plan.



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This is why I ask that you include a review of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve as part of Congress's deliberations on the LIHEAP cuts. Tapping the Reserve might help decrease pressure on supplies and bring the price of heating oil back to Earth. I know that the Federal Government's past ways of doing business are at an end. That only increases the need for creative thinking and for all options to be put on the table. Maine people can afford, and deserve, no less. I look forward to your support.

Sincerely,

  
Paul R. LePage  
Governor